

scientific society that attendance which they were able to bestow on professional societies and meetings. During last session, they had also felt a great blank in the absence from their meetings of their former distinguished president, Dr. Graham, whose long and painful illness had, for many months previous to his death, precluded his taking any part in their proceedings. Dr. Maclagan felt it to be unnecessary in such a meeting to eulogise the character of Professor Graham. They all not only knew him to be a zealous cultivator and successful teacher of botany, but they had individually found in him a kind, upright and sincere friend. His affable manner, conjoined with his highly honourable deportment, had procured for him the respect and esteem of all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

It was a gratification to find in Dr. Graham's successor the gentleman to whose zeal and activity the Botanical Society of Edinburgh owed its origin. He congratulated Dr. Balfour on his return to his native city, and expressed the hope and expectation that in his new position he would materially support and advance the interests of the Society.

The following communications were read:—

1. "Contributions to the Physiology of Fecundation in Plants." By George Dickie, M.D., Lecturer on Botany in the University and King's College of Aberdeen. (See p. 5 of the present Number.)

2. "Remarks on some forms of *Rubus*." By T. Bell Salter, M.D., F.L.S., Ryde, Isle of Wight. (See 'Annals,' vol. xvi. p.361.)

Mr. James M'Nab exhibited a specimen of silk cotton (*Bombax Ceiba*), and mentioned that this substance was under trial in this city, with the view of its being employed in the manufacture of hats.

Specimens of *Barkhausia setosa*, gathered near North Queensferry, by Andrew Dewar, Esq., Dunfermline, were placed on the table.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Additional note on the Belted Kingfisher, Alcedo Alcyon, Linn., obtained in Ireland.

THE communication on this subject, which was published in the December Number of the 'Annals,' p. 430, was despatched immediately on receipt of the information, more especially that Mr. Yarrell (likewise informed to the same effect) might as early as possible be in possession of it for the second edition of his 'History of British Birds,' then just being concluded. It was consequently deficient in some few points, to which the attention of my correspondents in Dublin has since been directed. It was desirable to know the respective dates on which the birds were met with in Meath and Wicklow, that we might thus guard against the possibility of "one and the same" bird being noticed as two individuals. Mr. Warren replies, the Belted Kingfisher was shot by Frederick A. Smith, Esq., at Annsbrook, county of Meath, on the 26th of October, and that the statement of Mr. Latouche's gamekeeper on the 20th of November was, that the bird seen by him fishing at the river between Lug-

gela and Lough Dan appeared a few days before the latter date. We may therefore conclude that two individuals of this species have been met with. Mr. Ball considers that the full strong plumage which the specimen presents, denotes a truly wild bird, and one which could not have escaped from confinement. According to the descriptions of Wilson and Richardson, it is a female, and not, at all events, in younger plumage than that of the second year.

Belfast, Dec. 3, 1845.

WM. THOMPSON.

SPICULA OF MOLLUSCA.

Fusiform spicula are common in sponges, and in the flesh of several of the true radiated animals, as the fleshy parts of *Lobularia*, and of many other of the *Zoophytaria*, where they form a kind of skeleton to support the more fleshy kinds; the existence of them in the fleshy corals and the sponges has been regarded as one of the reasons why the sponges must be animals. I am not aware that these bodies have been observed in Mollusca; but the genus *Phyllidia*, which is destitute of any true shell, has its mantle strengthened with a regular network formed of ropes of simple, regular, fusiform, transparent spicula about a line or a line and a half in length.

These ropes of spicula form lines which radiate round the circumference of the mantle, and these are crossed at right angles by other ropes of spicula which are parallel to the edge of the mantle, leaving square interspaces which decrease in size, and the ropes decreasing in thickness as they approach the edge. The spicula are also very abundant and larger in the interspaces of the flesh of the foot.

J. E. GRAY.

INDIAN SPECIES OF PAPILIO.

To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.

GENTLEMEN,—Being the “English entomologist” alluded to by Mr. E. Doubleday as having given information to Dr. Erichson respecting certain Indian species of *Papilio*, which I knew to be erroneous (vol. xvi. p. 305), I must request you, in justice to Dr. Erichson and myself, to state that Dr. Erichson has nowhere, either in his ‘Bericht’ for 1842 or elsewhere, stated that *P. Ganesa* is synonymous with *P. Arcturus*, *P. Polyuctes* with *P. Bootes*, and *P. Xenocles* with *P. Pollux*. His observations refer to the respective juxtaposition of the four first-named species, and to the possibility of the two latter being identical, evidently founded upon a comparison of Mr. Doubleday’s description of *P. Xenocles* with my note on *P. Pollux*, that the latter “variat magnitudine macularum.” It is hard that Dr. Erichson should have the errors of his translators laid on his shoulders, and it is still harder that I should have such an imputation as the above laid to my charge, which you will thus see has no other foundation than the imagination of its author, and which was the more uncalled-for, as I had denied the imputation long ago in Mr. Doubleday’s presence at the British Museum.

Probably it will be further ascertained by a bona fide examination of Dr. Erichson’s ‘Bericht’ itself, that some of the other “very nu-